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Conference reports

Preliminary Considerations on the *Corpus Coranicum Christianum* The Qur'an in Translation – A Survey of the State of the Art

Berlin, 5–7 December 2018

The *Corpus Coranicum* (CC) project requires little introduction to the readers of this journal. This long-term project hosted at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW), under the leadership of Angelika Neuwirth, is currently preparing an online critical edition of the Qur'an text and making it accessible as an open access database <<https://corpuscoranicum.de/>>. A new research initiative based on this Academy project is currently taking shape through the efforts of one of Angelika Neuwirth's former doctoral students, Manolis Ulbricht (Byzantine Studies) at Freie Universität Berlin. His PhD thesis *Coranus Graecus* (see *COMSt Newsletter*, 8 (July 2014), 5–6) includes a Greek-Arabic synoptical edition, a commentary, and a glossary of the early Greek translation of the Qur'an preserved in Nicetas of Byzantium's *Refutation of the Qur'an* (MS Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, gr. 681, c. 870 CE) (FU Berlin, 2015, soon to be published in the series *Studi e testi*). As such, Ulbricht's thesis forms the nucleus of this new branch of present interdisciplinary research initiative, the *Corpus Coranicum Christianum* (CCC).

The long-term goal of the future CCC research initiative is to study the translations of the Qur'an from its beginning in the seventh century CE up until the early modern period in the principal 'Christian' languages of the time: Greek, Syriac, and Latin. The aim of the initiative is to work through these translations comparatively, and to make these texts available online through a synoptic digital edition. Later on, the project might be expanded to include more languages and historical periods. Despite being generously supported by start-up funding from the Presidency of the Freie Universität Berlin, the CCC is only in its conceptual phase and not yet an official project. The aim of the workshop 'Preliminary Considerations on the *Corpus Coranicum Christianum*' in Berlin in December 2018 was therefore threefold: (i) to bring together scholars from various disciplines and countries working on Qur'anic translations; (ii) to explore avenues for further collaboration; and (iii) to establish a methodological framework for a future database and a comparative analysis of translation techniques.

As a primary result of the workshop, some individual projects within the overall framework of CCC are currently being prepared in anticipation of

strengthening the basis for a future application of a long-term project, which shall be methodologically based upon the CC project. This is why the keynote speech of the CCC workshop was delivered by Angelika Neuwirth. Her talk analyzed and interpreted the Qur'an's recourse to Psalms as a kind of 'Translation' in terms of 'Liturgical Patterns and Theological Messages'.

The scope of the sources included in this exploratory workshop was intentionally broad. It ranged from full translations or explicit quotations of the Qur'anic text to mere allusions of it. The workshop was divided into three sections according to the three languages of translation: Latin, Greek, and Syriac. In addition to these philological aspects, a fourth technical section was included that dealt with the digital humanities (DH) and explored possible methods of establishing and constructing a CCC-database.

As most source material is available in Latin, three panels were dedicated to the section *Corpus Coranicum Latinum* (CCL), which comprised the most prominent part of the program. In a first panel, which was devoted to the earliest sources (CCL I), the translations by Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo were assessed with regards to the issue of the readership (Nàdia Petrus Pons) and the presence of scientific vocabulary (Julian Yolles). In addition, the Qur'anic quotations included in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin translations of Arabic scientific treatises were examined (Charles Burnett). A second panel (CCL II) examined the sources through which Latin Christians read and accessed the Qur'an, with papers on the Latin glosses in Latin and Arabic Qur'ans (José Martínez Gázquez), Robert of Ketton's use of Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* (J. L. Alexis Rivera Luque), and the question of the character of Ramon Martí's Islamic sources (Görge K. Hasselhoff). The focus of the third panel (CCL III) was on early modern Qur'an translations, with papers on the sixteenth-century translation by Egidio da Viterbo (Katarzyna K. Starczewska), the seventeenth-century translation and commentary by the Jesuit Ignazio Lomellini (Paul Shore), and the recently discovered 1632 translation by Johann Zechendorff (Reinhold F. Gleib).

The single panel of Greek Qur'an translations (*Corpus Coranicum Byzantinum*, CCB) covered both the first appearances of the Qur'an in Byzantium, as well as in the late Byzantine period. The former period was addressed with papers on the linguistic character of the eighth/ninth-century Greek translation, especially its non-classical vocabulary (Erich Trapp), and the historical background of Muslim-Byzantine rivalry behind its emergence (Jakub Sypiański). The late period involved papers appraising the knowledge of the Qur'an and Islam by Gregory Palamas (Evangelos Katafyllis) and John VI Cantacuzene (Marco Fanelli).

Papers on the *Corpus Coranicum Syriacum* (CCS), the language least represented at this workshop, were presented on the Qur'anic quotations in

the Arabic disputation of Abū Qurra with the Caliph al-Ma'mūn compared to the Garshuni version of the *Legend of Sergius Bahīrā* (Yousef Kouriyhe), and on the double/triple occurrences of Qur'anic verses in Dionysius Bar Šalībī's *Disputation against the Arabs* (Alexander M. Schilling).

A special panel on the interdisciplinary nature of the overall project and its implications was entitled '*Corpus Coranicum Christianum – A Digitalized Trial Version*'. It consisted of papers on the Greek translation of the Qur'an preserved by Nicetas of Byzantium (Manolis Ulbricht), the Syriac excerpts from the Qur'an in Dionysius Bar Šalībī's *Disputation against the Arabs* (Bert Jacobs), and the Latin translation by the seventeenth-century Franciscan Germanus de Silesia (Ulisse Cecini). Prior to the workshop, these three scholars had agreed to provide micro-editions of selected common passages (Q 3:42-7; 90:1-4; 112), which were digitally processed in an online interactive edition by Joel Kalvesmaki (see <<http://textalign.net/quran/>>). The trial session continued with a presentation on the make-up and functions of this tool (Joel Kalvesmaki), and concluded with a brief comparison of the translation techniques applied to the selected materials.

Besides the work on the sources themselves, the workshop gave special attention to the use of the digital humanities in the study of Qur'anic translations. This included an introductory workshop on the goals and techniques of the digital humanities (Nadine Arndt, Oliver Pohl), as well as presentations on the Paleocoran project (<<https://paleocoran.eu/>>) (Oliver Pohl), Ediarum (<<http://www.bbaw.de/telota/software/ediarum/>>) (Nadine Arndt), and the valence of TEI for editing synoptic editions (Joel Kalvesmaki).

The CCC workshop was designed also as a networking platform, thus encouraging and facilitating synergies between the different research activities and fields in the broader scientific context. Events promoting these types of engagement included the presentation of the programmatic thoughts on a future 'Collegium Oriens Christianus' (COC) at FU Berlin (Shabo Talay) and the evening lecture on the interactive digital edition of the New Testament (<<http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/de/>>) (Holger Strutwolf). Finally, the ERC-funded project 'The European Qur'an. Islamic Scriptures in European Culture and Religion 1150-1850' (EuQu, ERC Synergy Grant, 2019–2025) on the cultural history of the Qur'an in Western Europe, which started shortly after the workshop, was presented by one of the four project leaders (Jan Loop).

The full workshop programme is available at <<https://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/we02/griechisch/byzantinistik/projekte/corpus-coranicum-christianum/workshop/index.html>>. The proceedings are being prepared for publication and will be published probably in Brill's series *Documenta Coranica* (eds A. Neuwirth, F. Déroche, Ch. Robin, and M. Marx) with the title *Documenta Coranica Christiana. Christian Translations*

of the *Qur'an*—*Preliminary Considerations of the State of the Art* (ed. Manolis Ulbricht).

The initiator of the research initiative *Corpus Coranicum Christianum*, Manolis Ulbricht, is currently on a two-year research leave with a scholarship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in order to dedicate himself to the research of Byzantine translations of the *Qur'an* in affiliation with the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

Manolis Ulbricht, Freie Universität Berlin
Bert Jacobs, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Versions of the Apostolic Past: Ancient Translations of the Apostolic Fathers (AnTrAF)

Leuven, 22–23 May 2019

The first AnTrAF conference, generously founded by the Fritz-Thyssen Stiftung, was organised by Dan Batovici (KU Leuven, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies) and hosted at the Irish College (The Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe) on 22 and 23 May 2019. It was meant to facilitate a concerted reflection on the issues posed by, and to update various facets of, the *Ancient Translations of the Apostolic Fathers*. The starting point is the fact that the Apostolic Fathers corpus contains an interesting, if motley, sample of early Christian texts whose Greek was edited several times in the past couple of decades, with new critical editions and commentaries being now produced for each book separately within the on-going series *Oxford Apostolic Fathers*. The versions, even though very interesting and quite varied, receive far less attention. Despite a few exceptions, critical editions of the versions are either still lacking or outdated. The papers in this conference offered a series of updates on various aspects of the Apostolic Fathers transmission in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, Middle Persian, Ethiopic, and Arabic. Joseph Verheyden kindly accepted the invitation to serve as discussant to all offered papers.

The first two papers dealt with the transmission of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. Benjamin Gleede (Universität Zürich), offered ‘Preliminary Remarks to a Preliminary Critical Edition of the ‘Literary’ *Passio Polycarpi*’. The problem of the Latin transmission of the *Martyrdom* and its relationship to the other versions has not been tackled in scholarship since von Harnack’s time. Gleede showed that a new attempt of reconstructing the text is bound to remain preliminary in several respects, despite all the considerable advances in comparison to Zahn. Producing a stemma would require a comprehensive analysis of the textual relationship between the diverse *passionalia* as a